

Message Text

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12
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAM-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /060 W
----- 087847

R 310749Z JUL 76
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6600
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY OSLO
USMISSION NATO
USEC BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, PGOV, SP
SUBJECT: CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS: SPANISH-VATICAN ACCORD SIGNED

REF: (A) MADRID 5735, (B) MADRID 5525

1. AS FLAGGED IN REF A (NOTAL), FOREIGN MINISTER OREJA
FLEW TO ROME ON JULY 28 FOR THE SIGNING OF THE FIRST,
AND MOST IMPORTANT, OF AN EXPECTED SERIES OF ACCORDS
MODIFYING THE CONCORDAT. HE CHARACTERIZED IT AS "AN
EVENT OF TRUE HISTORIC IMPORTANCE WHICH MARKS THE END OF
ONE PHASE IN CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS AND THE OPENING OF
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ANOTHER." THE SIGNING RECEIVED FRONT-PAGE COVERAGE IN

THE MADRID PRESS OF JULY 29. UPON HIS RETURN FROM ROME LATE JULY 28, OREJA HELD AN INFORMAL PRESS CONFERENCE DURING WHICH HE NOTED THAT (1) IT WAS THE KING WHO HAD BEEN THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND THIS NEW HARMONY, AND (2) HE WAS CONFIDENT OF REACHING SPECIFIC ACCORDS FOR THE REGULATION OF CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS WITHIN A SHORT TIME (LATER SPECIFIED AS WITHIN TWO YEARS).

2. THE ACCORD ON THE PARTIAL REVISION OF THE CONCORDAT OF 1953 CONSISTS OF A PREAMBLE AND TWO ARTICLES. THE FIRST ARTICEL DEALS WITH THE RENUNCIATION BY THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT OF THE RIGHT TO NAME BISHOPS, AND THE SECOND WITH THE RENUNICATION BY THE VATICAN OF THE RIGHT TO SPECIAL LEGAL STATUS AND PRIVILEGES FOR PRIESTS (THE SO-CALLED ECCLESIASTICAL "FUERO"). THE INTRUDUCTORY SECTION SETS FORTH THE PRINCIPLES INFORMING THIS EFFORT, BY SPEAKING OF THE "PROFOUND PROCESS OF TRANSFORMATION" WHICH SPAINISH SOCIETY HAS UNDERGONE THESE LAST YEARS, AND COMMITS BOTH PARTIES TO STUDY OTHER PENDING ISSUES WITH A VIEW TO CONCLUDING "AS SOON AS POSSIBLE" SPECIFIC ACCORDS WHICH WILL GRADUALLY REVISE THE CONCORDAT.

3. THE SIGNING OF THIS ACCORD HAS FURTHERED THE CURRENT STRONG TREND TOWARD MORE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE, AND WILL BE A FEATHER IN THE CAP FOR THE KING, THE SUAREZ ADMINISTRATION, AND OREJA. COMMITTEES ARE ALREADY BEING FORMED TO TACKLE OTHER MAJOR PENDING CHURCH-STATE ISSUES. THE SECRETARY OF THE PAPAL NUNCIATURA TOLD THE EMBASSY THAT THESE WOULD MOST LIKELY INCLUDE SUCH MATTERS AS FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE CLERGY, SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS FOR PRIESTS, AND THE BROAD FIELD OF CHURCH EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TREATY SIGNATURE, CHURCH STATE RELATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 31 JUL 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976MADRID05886
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760296-0517
From: MADRID
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t1976072/aaaaaavw.tel
Line Count: 93
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 MADRID 5735, 76 MADRID 5525
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 31 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <31 MAR 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <31 MAR 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS: SPANISH-VATICAN ACCORD SIGNED
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, PGOV, SP
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006